

Around the House

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Housing and Community Services Department Mission

*... to provide housing and
related services
to benefit the citizens and
neighborhoods of
Wichita*



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The fall season signals several regular events. One is the start of school—not a big hit with the kids, but parents are happy!

While the children are getting settled into new classes and putting aside the last activities of summer vacation, there are a few things that they and their parents might want to make note of. The Wichita Public Library has a lot of activities planned for the whole family. Some of those include:

Preschool Storytime—Stories, fingerplays and more for children aged 3-6.

Toddle Time—Stories, rhymes and motion activities for 2 year olds.

Family Storytime—Interactive storytelling and activities for children aged 3-7 with their families.

Call your local library branch to find out about these and other activities designed to make reading and learning fun!

Another tradition of fall is fire safety week which is recognized in October. This year the theme is **"Prevent Home Fires"**. At this time of year, we always like to remind our families of fire facts and fire prevention strategies. Following are some fire facts:

- Cooking fires are the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries.

- Improper handling of smoking materials is the leading cause of fire deaths.
- Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in reported home structure fires in half.

There are things adults can do to reduce the likelihood of fires. Following are some tips:

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food.
- Keep lamps, light fixtures, and light bulbs away from anything that can burn, such as lamp shades, bedding, curtains, and clothing.
- Turn portable space heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Never use the oven to heat a home.
- If you smoke, smoke outside—never in bed.
- Never smoke in a home where oxygen is used.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet, out of the reach of children.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn.
- When the smoke alarm sounds, get out and stay out.

For children's tips, read the "Results that Matter" about our children's fire safety contest!

Results That Matter

Several years ago we sponsored a fire prevention week poster contest for children in our community. It was such a big hit that we are planning to do it again. It was one way that we produced "Results that Matter" and might have saved someone's life and property.

Posters have to be on poster size paper (22 x 28) and must be original artwork (no tracing or stenciling). The following materials can be used: markers, paints, crayons and colored pencils.

Posters must be turned in by September 30, 2008. They can be turned in at any Wichita Fire Station, Neighborhood City Hall or recreation center.





From the Director's Chair Mary K. Vaughn

Several months ago I announced that the Housing and Community Services Department was partnering with the County and State on a prisoner reentry program. The goal of the program is to help returning offenders find the resources they will need in order to be successful. That includes housing, jobs, counseling, etc.

Unfortunately, some of you thought my announcement meant that we were placing ex-offenders in our Public Housing properties — that is not true! Our goal is to find housing for them throughout the community and that is what is

being done. I wanted to make sure we were clear on that before I announce another new initiative.

We just started a program to help the chronically homeless find housing. Again, our goal is not to place them in Public Housing. Our goal is to find affordable rental housing in the community, where they can settle down, receive services, and start putting their lives back together.

The Housing and Community Services Department is the primary public agency in Wichita whose mission is to address the housing needs of low to

moderate income persons. And when such persons face other challenges such as mental or physical health conditions, we have to find ways to help them overcome these obstacles so that they can achieve what we all want—safe, affordable housing.

That is our goal in the two programs I have mentioned. The people we are helping, already call Wichita “home”. I hope you will agree that when we help those with these special needs, we strengthen our whole community!

Rules for Reporting Income

Public Housing and Section 8 programs are based on client income. Tenants and clients must report their income and keep our records current—this means you must report increases and decreases. Following is a reminder of the rules for each program and the types of income which must be reported. If you fail to abide by these guidelines, you may lose your housing assistance.

When to report income changes?

- Public Housing—within 10 days of the change and at your recertification
- Section 8—within 14 days of the change and at your recertification

Who to report changes to?

- Public Housing—Property Manager
- Section 8—Housing Specialist

What will happen when you report changes?

- Public Housing—you will receive a Notice of Rent Adjustment
- Section 8—you will receive an Amendment to the Housing Assistance Contract

Who's income must be reported?

- Public Housing and Section 8—anyone 18 years of age or older.

What is income?

The following are examples of income which must be reported. If you have any questions, please contact your Property Manager (Public Housing) or Housing Specialist (Section 8).

- Employment
- Employment promotion
- Own business
- Self employment such as mowing lawns, hair-styling or hair cutting, repairing automobiles or trucks, housekeeping
- New job
- Part-time job
- Overtime payment from your job
- Increase in job hours or pay
- Military pay
- Unemployment benefits
- Child support

- Alimony
- Employment of persons over the age of 18
- Pension
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Social Security
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI or SSDI)
- Veterans Benefits
- General Assistance
- Cash received on a consistent basis
- Cash received for providing services such as self-employment
- Payments made by someone else on your behalf for specific items for services such as payment of your phone bill, utilities, food, hygiene, or cleaning items

All of these items are examples of income and must be reported according to the guidelines listed. Failure to report income will very likely result in termination of your housing assistance.

Behind the Scenes ...

Most people who call our office, speak with Mary Williams Bey. She is one of two people who regularly answer the phone. Recently Mary was recognized by a resident of Greenway Manor for her assistance in resolving a lighting problem in the parking lot.



We're proud of our people!

Another employee was recognized by a McLean Manor resident for rescuing her from the elevator. Michael Fisher was the hero in this case.

We thank our tenants for taking the time to write complimentary letters and we thank our employees for continuing to make us proud!

WELCOME

We have added one new employee since the last newsletter: Shelly Haupt has joined our staff in a new position which will work on obtaining housing for the chronically homeless. (See the Director's Chair letter above).

Section 8 News

The goal of all Housing and Community Services Department programs is to provide safe, affordable housing and we do that in a variety of ways. One of the most popular programs is the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, primarily because it provides voucher holders with a choice of where they can live and raise their families. There is a great demand for the vouchers and we work hard to complete required screening, etc. so that the vouchers can get into the hands of eligible persons.

But the process doesn't stop once the family is housed. Unfortunately, our voucher holders are failing to meet their responsibilities, which often leads to termination from the program. When families are terminated for failing to meet their obligations, they are not able to reapply for Section 8 or Public Housing when applications.

Following are some of the frequent reasons Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher holders are being terminated. Please read this list carefully, because if you do any of these things, you will lose your housing choice voucher too!

Unreported Income. Federal regulations require that you report all household income. Section 8 staff are required to check HUD's income verification system with the information you report. If you don't report income that the system says you have, the termination process will start. Just because you report additional income doesn't mean you will automatically be terminated. But if you fail to report it, there is a good chance you will lose your voucher.

Unauthorized Person. Federal regulations require you to report by name, all persons who will live in your household. If that changes, you are to report it when the change occurs. If you don't report

someone and we learn later from at least 2 government sources, that you have 'unauthorized' persons in your household, the termination process will start. Just because you have a new person added to your household doesn't mean your voucher will automatically be terminated, but if you fail to report that person, there is a good chance that you will lose your voucher.

Utilities. Federal regulations require that you maintain working utilities at all times while you are using a voucher to subsidize your rent (or house payment). If Section 8 staff learn that all of your utilities are not on, the termination process will start. 44 people have been terminated for failure to maintain their utilities since January, 2008. There are programs available to help with utility payments if you are experiencing a problem. Call 2-1-1 to find out what help you may be eligible for.

In addition to these reasons, voucher holders have been terminated for failing to participate in the required annual recertification process, failing to maintain the property in good condition, abandoning their unit and being evicted by the landlord for cause.

Don't let this happen to you! If you truly need your housing assistance—and we assume all of our families do, please take care to meet your obligations. The future of your subsidized housing is in your hands!



MEETING REMINDERS:

Landlords:

Don't forget—the next landlord briefing will be held on September 10, 2008, at 2:00 pm, at the Housing and Community Services Department office, 332 N. Riverview.

Section 8 and FSS Clients:

**Please Note The
DATE CHANGE
For The September Family
Self-Sufficiency
Workshop**

2008 FSS Workshops

6:00 pm
September 11
October 9
November 6

2008 CreditSmart Workshops 10:00 am

Atwater City Hall
October 18: Becoming A Homeowner

2008 Homeowners Alumni Meetings 5:30 pm

Atwater City Hall
For current Section 8 homeowners!
September 15
November 17

Current HAP Payment Schedule

<i>Month</i>	<i>Mail Date</i>
OCTOBER 2008	SEPTEMBER 30, 2008
NOVEMBER, 2008	OCTOBER 31, 2008

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We're On The Web!
www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Housing

Did You Know?

The City of Wichita receives federal funds which the Housing and Community Services Department administers. Part of our administration duties is to report on how the funds were spent during the preceding year. We just completed the report for 2007-2008. Following are highlights of the services which we provided during that year. I hope you'll agree it's been a successful year!

Home Repairs

- 123 homes received emergency and exterior repairs and/or exterior paint

Neighborhoods

- 13 neighborhood cleanups were funded—funds paid for removal of tires and debris
- 3 homes were constructed after boarded structures were purchased and demolished—and sold to first time homebuyers

Youth

- 4,903 youth participated in after school recreation and enrichment programs
- 103 youth worked at summer jobs and received valuable training for a successful work experience

Women/Children

- Over 1,000 women and children who were victims of domestic violence, received shelter, counseling and other assistance

Leverage

When federal funds were used to support these types of programs, they generated private funds to help expand the impact.

- HOME funds of \$1.4M generated \$2.6M
- In the Home Improvement Loan Program, CDBG funds of \$7,175 generated \$30,271.



This is the season when we turn our clocks back so don't forget to do so before you go to bed on Saturday, November 1, 2008.

For example, if you go to bed at 10:00 pm, turn your clock back to 9:00 pm so that when you wake up on Sunday, you'll have the same time as everyone else!

By the way, this means we get an extra hour of sleep!